The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

VOL. VI., NO. 4. JUNE, 1898. ONE PENNY.

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"Forgotten."

"FORGOTTEN, as a dead man out of mind."
Nay, surely, when the royal Psalmist sang,
Some thought of Life's hard teaching, cold, unkind,
Like nightshade 'mid his pure white lilies sprang,
Love, like a champion armed at cry of need,
Rises beside each cherished grave to say,
"I live, I struggle, hide the wounds that bleed,
Never forget them for a single day."

Back to the world the quiet mourners turn,
Striving the daily duty still to do,
To veil the eyes that stream, the hearts that yearn,
For them who made the life sweet, pure, and true;
In reverent jealousy their memories guarding,
'Gainst sneer or weariness from those around,
The prompt impatience of this world's awarding,
Where Grief, too faithful to the Past, is found.
Time's hand doth staunch the wound, and draws above it,
The decent robes of custom and of life,
The daily task-work gives to all who prove it,
Strength for the hour, and courage for the strife.
Pale flowers spring up, where once our roses bloomed,
Pale moonbeams glisten, where our full sun shone,
And passing where our treasures lie entombed,
We learn, in patient hope, to labour on.

But, oh dead eyes, that watch us on our road,
Look on us, mark us, scan us through and through;
Bravely, although we strive to bear our load,
Love sees where sorrow takes her tribute due;
Some day, some day, long-silent lips may tell,
The warfare past, the heavy arms resigned,
Together, in God's joy unspeakable,
"Darling, I never once was out of mind."

The Power to be Quiet.

BY REV. JOHN HUNTER, D.D.

The words of wise men are heard in quiet.—ECCLES. ix. 17

(Notes of an Address delivered at the Daily Service in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh).

"Unquietness," says an old writer, "is the greatest evil that can come into the soul except sin." The truth and force of this remark will be seen when we consider a few of the blessings which depend on the power to be quiet.

1. Consider how much we lose of the beauty of the world when our hearts are full of the unrest which selfish desire and striving generate. Without the tranquil mind it is almost impossible to enjoy nature. The flowers and hills and stars, the running brooks, and the winds among the trees tell us little, if anything, of their secrets when we are disquieting ourselves in vain. We must be quiet to get the best impressions from this universe of sights and sounds.

2. Consider how much we lose of what is gracious, beautiful, and helpful in our human relations, because we carry about with us an unquiet mind, a heart seldom or never

At leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathise.

Our restless and selfish moods, tempers, and habits diminish our sensitiveness to the poetry and pathos of human life, take from us the gift of appreciation, and leave us with little power to respond to the sweet and gentle sanctities of home and friendship.

3. Consider how much we lose of ourselves, how we fail to come into true and complete possession of ourselves, because we have so little of the power to be quiet. The literary sense, one of the masters of literature tells us, perishes for want of repose, and the same might be said of even finer and more precious gifts—the gifts which make of men great prophets and great saints. Alas! for all that God gives and man loses.

4. The power to be quiet has its intellectual value. It is necessary to clear, deep, and strong thinking. The mind must be quiet to get the best work out of itself, and to be able to penetrate or grasp clearly any subject. Vexed by vulgar desires or irritated by slights, it cannot secure that concentration of power which is so essential to clearness and directness of vision. To think to any good purpose it is not enough even to be alone; we must have the power to be quiet when we are alone—the power, that is, to hold the mind calmly and steadily to its work above all the strife and tumult of the lower life.

5. The power to be quiet has its ethical as well as its purely intellectual value. To be able to answer in moments of critical trial the vital question—"What is the right thing to do? what is my duty?"—we must be able to separate ourselves from the excitement and urgent pleading of private desire and interest, and from the tyranny of worldly idea and custom, from the convention which often takes the place of conscience. The clear vision only comes to the calm heart—the heart free from wrong feeling and selfish affection. It is the placid lake that reflects the mountains and the blue skies, and, when the night comes down, the everlasting stars. So it is in the quiet soul—the lights of the moral heavens reflect themselves.

6. To receive the deepest religious impressions, to have the great truths of religion as a real and vital possession, we must have the power to be quiet. The eternal voices are not heard when the world and passion are speaking, and we are troubled about many things. The visions of the seer and mystic ask for discipline and quietude. It is the calm, brooding spirit that has given us the prophets of the east and the west. The quiet and contemplative mind shares the blessing of the pure in heart who see God. "Be still and know." "When I was silent I heard a voice." It is in stillness and silence, when mind and heart and soul are fully awake but calm, that we are most conscious of the One Presence—

> In secret silence of the mind
> My heaven and there my God I find.

Many of us find it hard to believe what we would fain believe, and much of our religion is a dim and doubtful tradition, just because we have lost the power to be quiet. Out of life and experience come the great revealings. "What does it matter," as George Fox once said to Cromwell, "that we have the Scriptures if we have lost the Spirit that wrote them?" We cannot expect the unseen things to be supreme and commanding realities to us if they are never allowed to get sole and undisturbed possession of our feeling and thought, and if all those secret and subtle ways are closed by which the Silent Spirit approaches the heart.

7. The power to be quiet is power for worship. It is essential to prayer, and to the receiving of the full benefit of our gathering together from time to time for the social rites of religion. The best things do not force themselves unbidden upon us; we must be prepared to receive them, prepared to meet our God.

It would change some of our familiar forms of speech if we realised how possible it is that when we are complacently dismissing a religious service as "dull," we may in that judgment be passing sentence upon ourselves, and be condemning our own unserious and unthoughtful moods and habits.

8. The power to be quiet is the condition of all noble and fruitful activity. To be busy does not always mean to be fruitful. Many so-called busy men, both in the world and in the church, are painfully barren and uninteresting, and their bustling activities add little to the sum of human good. Industry, enterprise, and zeal are not everything. The contemplative side of life has its pressing claims. True and sound progress in almost every sphere depends, equally alike,

on action and thought. To be practical does not mean to be shallow. What we do depends ultimately upon what we are. Without the power to be quiet our work must suffer in quality, and become woefully superficial and defective.

9. Amid the care and strife of our common life how much we need the power to be quiet! It is pitiful to be at the mercy of things which are but the incidents of a brief and passing day. To be strong and brave we must have root in ourselves. To get out of life a Divine education we must have the quiet and well-balanced mind which in prosperity keeps us humble and in adversity patient. The power to be quiet means power to suffer and be strong, power to compel losses to yield us some moral gain, and out of temporal defeat to wrest an eternal victory.

It may seem hardly possible for us who live in these days to get and to keep the power to be quiet. Life has changed, and the whole state of society is different from what it was even fifty years ago. Simplicity is going out of fashion. We have no love for quiet things. Even home and church are suffering from the excitement and the supply of the means of excitement which are characteristic of our time. What a constant rush are the lives of many men and women! Quiet work, quiet pleasure, quiet feeling, quiet thought, quiet prayer are things of which they appear to be utterly ignorant. They must spend even their holidays in crowds, and the noise of the big town or city has become such a part of their nature that they must have the echo of it among the hills and by the sea. They have no power to be quiet.

> They chatter, nod and hurry by,
> And never once possess their souls
> Before they die.

It is possible, however, to cultivate and preserve the power to be quiet; the quietude not of weakness but of strength, not of passion exhausted but of passion controlled and used, not of a world renounced but of a world subdued to the service of the soul and the obedience of Christ.

Meditation will help us—frequent pauses in our busy days for serious reflection upon life's meaning and end, and for cherishing those highest thoughts which come not in noisy but in silent hours. *Prayer* will help us—the prayer that brings the sense of the Unseen Presence into our life, and the quickening and sustaining thought of the eternal goodness and care; the prayer that means the identification of the human will with the Divine will—rest in God. *The Worship of the Church* will help us—correcting and enlarging our individualism by giving us the sense of universal and eternal relationships. *Obedience* will help us. Great peace have they whose obedience to the highest and best is quick and constant; who, instead of getting away from things, seek rather to get right with things, to be reconciled to the Divine order of the world and life, reconciled to God. It is the peace of Jesus which the world cannot give nor take away, but which enables one to be quiet in the world, to venture abroad into all its excitements and strifes with a calm and brave heart, and, while seeking things temporal, to win with them and through them all the finest and most enduring things of life.

A Lover in June.

How shall I praise thee, O sweet new comer,
June, June, with the flower-crowned head?
While warm winds round thee whisper of summer,
And cool grass welcomes thine airy tread,
How shall I praise thee whom all things praise
From dawn to dusk of thy sunfilled days?
How shall I sing of thy lavish boon,
June, June?

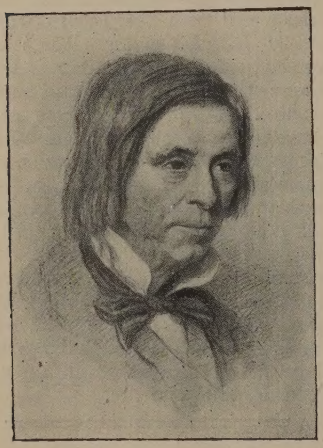
The corn-stalk green on the upland furrow
Waves in welcome its slim straight spear;
O'er sandy dunes where the rabbits burrow
The skylark's *Ave* is ringing clear.
And far in the secret woodland glade
Another music to thee is made,
For thine is the runnel's rippling tune,
June, June.

Pink and white with thy rosy guerdon
In festal garb are the hedgerows gay,
Pendent globes of the cherry tree's burden
Swell and redden from day to day.
Strawberries blushing beneath thy sun
Know that their sweetness from thee is won,—
From thy silver gloaming, thy golden noon,
June, June.

These things praise thee, fair month of roses:
June, June, what praise shall be mine
In this still twilight that softly closes
The rarest day of thy days divine?
To the world thou hast given this and this,—
Me thou hast dowered with my love's first kiss;
My heart and lips know thy dearest boon,
June, June.—*James Ashcroft Noble.*

Authentic Interviews.

IV.—LEIGH HUNT.



LEIGH HUNT. Ætat 66.

Kensington, May 13, 1850.

One of the most interesting spots in Old Kensington is Edwardes Square. On turning out of the broad high road, with its traffic and its noise, one enters an unexpected place of greenness, space, and peace. It is surrounded by neat little houses, some with ivy-clad walls, and all designed, so says tradition, by a speculative Frenchman to receive the officers of the victorious Napoleon!

At No. 32 there lives, after a residence of eleven years, Mr. James Henry Leigh Hunt, essayist, poet, critic—and there I paid him a visit.

He received me in a quaint and book-lined study, where I found him in his dressing gown, poring over an old volume. And a picturesque figure he makes with his sixty-six years, his whitening hairs, his bright but gentle eyes, his courteous manners, and his vivacious speech. He was not unwilling to talk of the past; of his earliest essays and his dramatic criticisms; of his literary ventures, prosperous or adverse—the *Examiner* and the *Reflector*, the *Tatler* and the *Indicator*, the *Monthly Repository* of W. J. Fox, which he continued and edited for several months; of his famous article, and trial, and imprisonment in Horsemonger gaol; of his stay in Italy with Byron and Shelley; of his love for old London, and especially royal Kensington; and I listened on and on without thought of the passing time.

Having heard that he was now turning to a different theme and writing a book on "The Religion of the Heart," I ventured to ask him about it.

"It is said you have taken to sermon writing. Is it a family failing?"

"My grandfather was the son of a clergyman, and himself the Rector of St. Michael's, in Bridge Town, Barbados. My father went into the Church in turn, was fond of divinity, and published a volume of sermons preached in Lisson Green, Paddington. Besides his fondness for sermons, he was a great reader of the Bible."

"When he left the Church, did he change his views?"

"For many years before his death, he had greatly relaxed in the orthodoxy of his religious opinions. Both he and my mother had become Unitarians. Of his changes of opinion, as well as of fortune, she partook also. She became a Unitarian, a Universalist, perhaps a Republican; and in her new opinions, as in her old, was apt, I suspect, to be a little too peremptory and to wonder at those who could be of the other side. It was her only fault."

"And were you brought up in the same faith?"

"So healthily had I the good fortune to be brought up in point of religion, that I remember kneeling one day at the school church during the Litany, when the thought fell upon me 'Suppose eternal punishment should be true?' An unusual sense of darkness and anxiety crossed me, but only for a moment. The next instant the extreme absurdity and impiety of the notion restored me to my ordinary feelings; and from that moment to this, I have never for one instant doubted the transitoriness of the doctrine and the unexclusive goodness of futurity."

"But when at school, at Christ Hospital, you had to be confirmed?"

"The Bishop of London confirmed a crowd of us in St. Paul's. In the ceremony of confir-

mation by the bishop, there was something too official and like a despatch of business, to excite my veneration. My head only anticipated the coming of his hand with a thrill in the scalp; and when it came it tickled me."

"What then, if any, was your schoolboy theology?"

"I mooted points of faith with myself very early, in consequence of what I heard at home. The very inconsistencies which I observed round about me in matters of belief and practice, did but the more make me wish to discover in what the right spirit of religion consisted; while, at the same time, nobody felt more instinctively than myself, that forms were necessary to preserve essence. I had the greatest respect for them, wherever I thought them sincere. I got up imitations of religious processions in the schoolroom, and persuaded my coadjutors to learn even a psalm in the original Hebrew, in order to sing it as part of the ceremony."

"You evidently did not share the usual prejudice against the Jews?"

"I used to go with some of my companions to the Synagogue in Duke's Place. These visits did me, I conceive, a great deal of good. They served to universalise my notions of religion, and to keep them unbigoted. It never became necessary to remind me that Jesus was himself a Jew. I have also retained through life a respectful notion of the Jews as a body."

"But you have not parted company with Christianity or abjured the Christian Church?"

"A Church appears to me an instinctive want in the human family. I never to this day pass one, even of a kind the most unreformed, without a wish to go into it, and join my fellow creatures in their affecting evidence of the necessity of an additional tie with Deity and Infinity, with this world and the next. But the wish is accompanied with an afflicting regret that I cannot recognise it free from barbarisms derogatory to both; and I sigh for some good old country church, finally delivered from the corruptions of the Councils, and breathing nothing but peace and love befitting the Sermon on the Mount. I believe that a time is coming, when such doctrine, and such only, will be preached."

"Your two old schoolfellows—Lamb and Coleridge: what were their chief features?"

"Charles Lamb had a head worthy of Aristotle, with as fine a heart as ever beat, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. As his frame, so was his genius. It was as fit for thought as could be, and equally as unfit for action. His understanding was too great to admit an absurdity; his frame was not strong enough to deliver it from a fear. He would beard a superstition, and shudder at the old phantasm while he did it."

"And Coleridge?"

"Coleridge was as little fitted for action as Lamb, but on a different account. His person was of a good height, but as sluggish and solid as the other's was light and fragile. He was very metaphysical and very corporeal: so in mooting everything, he said, so to speak, nothing. His brains pleaded all sorts of questions before him, and he heard them with too much impartiality, that he thought he might as well sit in his easy chair and hear them for ever, without coming to a conclusion."

"You do not think then that Coleridge had any message for the age?"

"The fault of Coleridge, like that of all thinkers indisposed to action, was that he was too content with things as they were,—at least too fond of thinking that old corruptions were full of good things, if the world did but understand them. Coleridge, indeed, could refine his meaning so as to accommodate it with great good nature to every one that came across him. With the same subtlety and good nature of interpretation, he would persuade a deist that he was a Christian, and an atheist that he believed in God; all which would be very good, if the world could get on by it, and not remain stationary; but, meanwhile, millions are wretched with having too little to eat, and thousands with having too much; and these subtleties are like people talking in their sleep, when they should be up and helping."

"You knew Blanco White, did you not?"

"Blanco White was an Anglo-Spaniard, who was forced to quit the Peninsula for his liberal opinions, and who died in his adopted country after many years' endeavour to come to some positive faith within the Christian pale. I believe there was not an honester man in the world, or one of acuter intellect, short of the mischief that had been done it by a melancholy temperament and a superstitious training."

"And is your new book an attempt to supply a religion of the heart, rather than of the intellect?"

"It proposes to supply, not thoughts and aspirations only, but a definite faith, and a daily set of duties, to such humble, yet unabject, and truly religious souls, as cannot accept unintelligible and unworthy ties of conscience, and yet feel both their weakness and their earnestness with sufficient self knowledge to desire ties of conscience, both as bonds and encouragements. I wish I could say more of the book, and enlarge on that remarkable state of existing religious uneasiness, which I cannot but regard as one of the last phases of transition from inconsistent and embittered modes of faith to one more at peace with itself, ultimately designed to be wholly so with God, man, and futurity. In the first, faintest, and even turbid dawn of the advent of that time, I see the tops of our church steeples, old and new, touched by a light long looked for, long announced, long in spirit against letter prepared for and produced by the divinest hearts that have appeared on earth."

"Then you believe there may be personal, vital sympathy amid credal diversity?"

"I admire and love all hearty, and earnest, and sympathising men, whatever may be their creed. I may differ from one of them in this or that respect; I may differ with a second in another; but difference with such men, provided we differ in their own spirit, is more harmonious than accord with others; nay, could form a part of the highest music of our sphere, being founded on the very principle of the beautiful, which combines diversity with sameness, and "whose service is perfect freedom." Nobody desires an insipid, languid, and monotonous world, but a world of animated moral beauty equal to its physical beauty, and a universal church, embracing many folds."

"And you believe that this universal church will be undogmatic, as well as Catholic?"

"It seems clear to me that the knell of the letter of Christianity itself has struck, and that it is time for us to inaugurate and enthrone the spirit. Dogma, whatever may be the convulsive appearances to the contrary, has ceased to be a vital European principle; and nothing again will ever be universally taken for Christianity, but the religion of loving duty to God and man,—to God, as the Divine Mind which brings good and beauty out of blind working matter; and to man, as God's instrument for advancing the world we live in, and as partaker with his fellow men of suffering, and endeavour, and enjoyment."

"And what will be the message of this Catholic Church to the world?"

"Behold, I give you a new commandment,—'Love one another.' 'In this ye fulfil the law and the prophets.' 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' 'God is love.' Such, and such only, are the texts upon which sermons will be preached. No hell. No unfatherliness. No monstrous exactions of assent to the incredible. No impious Athanasian Creed. No creed of any kind, but such as proves its divineness by the wish of all good hearts to believe it if they might. The world has outgrown the terrors of its childhood. Mankind have become too intelligent; too brave; too hungry and thirsty for a better state of things. God is not honoured by supposing him a niggard of his bounty. Jesus himself was not divine because he was Jesus, but because he had a divine and loving heart; and wherever such greatness has appeared, there has divineness appeared also, as surely as the same sunshine of heaven is on the mountain tops of east and west. Such are the doctrines, and such only, accompanied by expositions of the beauties and wonders of God's great book of the universe, which will be preached in the temples of the earth, including those of our beloved country, England, its beautiful old ivied turrets and their green neighbourhoods, then, for the first time, thoroughly uncontradicted and heavenly; with not a sound in them more terrible than the stormy, yet sweet organ, analagous to the beneficent winds and tempests; and no thought of here or hereafter that can disturb the quiet aspect of the graves."

It is only natural and fitting that a man of such religious reverence, as also a man of letters, should have counted amongst his friends Dr. Aikin and Sir John Bowring, Miss Martineau and Dr. Southwood Smith. The Church, Free and Catholic, has no adherent more devout, no advocate more eloquent than its lay preacher Leigh Hunt. "Abou Ben Adhem and the Angel" is much more than a translated fable;

it is the author's life ideal. Through good report and evil, through political prejudice and ecclesiastical narrowness, through generous hopes and prophetic trusts, increasing with advancing years, he has himself deserved the great commendation :— "Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

Here and There.

It is to be feared that many of our friends are living in a fool's paradise when they so abundantly congratulate themselves on the growing tolerance of the age in the matter of religious opinions. It is true that the more open and palpable methods of showing intolerance have passed away. Racks and thumb-screws no longer form part of the ecclesiastical apparatus for promoting sound doctrine. Civil disabilities on account of conscientious differences of beliefs are banished to the limbo where other abominations of the penal code are buried. Yet the old, narrow, bigoted spirit is by no means dead. We shear it down from time to time like the grass on our lawns, but like the grass it begins to grow again the next day. We think we have scotched it, and we are startled to meet it again in quite unexpected places. It becomes us ever to be on the watch against this evil, and to imitate the excited Frenchman in battle who, wishing to wreak extremest vengeance on his foes, shouted, "Kill them! Kill them very often!"

We are apt to think because a few conspicuous men in orthodox churches have shewn a friendly feeling towards us, or because the conclusions of Biblical criticism we have long been familiar with are now everywhere finding acceptance, or because some of the dreadful dogmas which once were so prominent in the pulpits of the land are now scarcely ever mentioned, that this indicates the spread of a kindlier spirit, and a wider charity towards those who do not hold orthodox views. But this is far from being the case. Still the majority of the clergy of every denomination are in the habit of regarding themselves as the sole and exclusive possessors of perfect truth, and many of them still seek to make things unpleasant for those who venture to think otherwise. A little while ago the newspapers told us of an English clergyman who refused to allow the funeral of a Dissenter to pass through the gates of the church-yard. He directed the relatives of the deceased to make a hole in the wall, as far as possible from the main entrance, and through this hole they were obliged to drag their dead. That, no doubt, is an extreme instance, but it only exhibits, in glaring colours, the feeling which widely exists and works, often in more effective ways because more quietly.

We were much startled a few weeks ago when visiting some of our Western Churches to find this quiet, effective intolerance almost everywhere at work. The common testimony of ministers and Church members alike declared that it was more difficult to withstand the pressure brought to bear against our churches to-day than it was 60 years ago. At the beginning of the Queen's reign these congregations were, for the most part, in a flourishing condition, and membership entailed very little social ostracism or pecuniary risk. Even by the most orthodox Churchmen their Unitarian neighbours were regarded with a not unkindly tolerance, as suffering indeed from a sort of mental defect, but to be accepted as part of the condition of things, and an inevitable element in the life of the little town. To-day it is widely different. The re-crudescence of the bigoted spirit which is so marked a feature of our times has found its way into these communities. The favourite form of shewing itself is by exclusive dealing. An ecclesiastico-tradesmen's boycott is set up. The grocer, or butcher, or linen-draper, or seedsman who is seen entering the door of our Meeting-House is a marked man. He finds his customers leaving him, and he is plainly told that if he will be a heretic he must pay the penalty in loss of trade. In like manner the lines of social intercourse are much more rigid than of old. The heretic finds himself shut out of certain influential circles as if he were a leper. And all this prevails to thin our churches, and to make it increasingly difficult to hold our own. Yet, what an argument all this furnishes for backing up our friends and comrades with sympathy and practical aid.

Let it not be thought, however, that the spirit of intolerance is to be found only in country towns far removed from the great centres of light and activity. We have before us the parochial magazine of a Birmingham church, in which the vicar, addressing his parishioners in a kind of Easter pastoral, says:—"Unitarians do not preach the Gospel, they cannot. They preach about poets and philosophers. What good will Browning do you if Christ be not risen? What will you do when you die if you are unsaved? Where will you spend eternity?" Constantly we are receiving reports from our friends in great towns of the efforts made by the clergy and others to detach children from our Sunday Schools, under the plea that safety is only to be found in the Church, and that children in our schools are in a lamentable and dangerous condition. We are inclined to laugh at the inherent absurdity of statements like these, but we must not minimise their terrible mischievousness. With the ignorant and the timid they have great effect. The day will come when bigotry shall be no more, but that day is clearly not yet.

It is easy to read much if we attend but little.

The Seed Sower;

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,
FOR THE HOME, THE SCHOOL, AND THE CHURCH.

Localised by Essex Church, London; All Souls, Belfast; Unity Church, London; Great Meeting, Leicester; Mansfield; The Western Union (all the churches); Kidderminster; Old Meeting, Church of the Messiah, and Hurst Street Mission, Birmingham; and other places.

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The Religion of Gentlemen.

BY A PHILANTHROPIC ALLEGORIST.

II.

Never is man so truly himself as when in the act of making a protest. Many philosophers have commented on this remarkable fact; few, however, have perceived that the supreme object of Man's protestations is evermore—himself. To live, in the human sense, is to idealize, and every Ideal involves a protest against the Real. Thus do we, in the works of our excellent and rare moments, secretly reproach ourselves for the common uniformity of our life, giving beauty to the reproach, and with the beauty permanence, in the products of Art and in the highest institution of the social state.

Among such institutions we reckon the Order of Gentlemen as one of the chief. And lest we should be misunderstood, let it be clearly stated now that in all which follows concerning the Gentleman we are speaking not of the Individual but of the Type. The Gentleman, then, is the contradiction of Man. Just as in the most refined circles of Boston Society the instructed traveller will find the judgment and condemnation of American life rather than the fulfilment of it, so in the Order of Gentlemen we should learn to see not an Association of Picked Specimens but merely a form of Man's eternal protest against himself. The Gentleman as he now exists represents not merely what humanity is not, but what under present conditions the vast plurality of the race is pathetically powerless to become. He is but an embodied dream—airily built in the world's vast and sorrowful night, by whom we know not, clothed with flesh and breathed into by the breath of life, how we cannot tell. As some pensive prisoner lightens the heavy hours of captivity by revelling in the liberties of fancy, and dwells upon his creations so lovingly and often that the prison walls become dreams and the fancies solidify into facts; so from the sorrowing heart of man there arises this phantom of a Gentleman, which by dint of dwelling upon and seeking after at length learns to go upon two feet; and now behold it walk abroad, well groomed, clean shaven, articulate and palpable, clothed as to its head with an irreproachable

stove-pipe and armed as to its pocket, not as was Teufelsdröchk at the North Cape "with a sufficient Birmingham horse-pistol," but with a more "sufficient" cheque book and supply of ready cash.

It is not our present purpose to trace the Order of Gentlemen to its origin; though, even if that purpose were ours, the conclusion of the whole matter would tally to a hair with the theory already given. We desire only to emphasize the proposition that this world, as now constituted, is no nursery for gentlemen. In saying this we repeat a claim already made—that we speak as those who know the world. When mention is made of "the human race," or of "mankind," we do not limit our view, as greater philosophers are apt to do, to the people who live in our suburb, or, in more comprehensive instances, to those who assist in carrying on the staple industry of our native town. Not that we have any prejudice against the teaching of Social Science—for we have taught it; not that we deny a function to the Incorporated Society of Professional Menders of the World, for ourselves were once active members thereof, and are still nominally on the roll. But of late years we have left the "bookish theoric" in abeyance, and humbly sought to widen the bounds of our actual experience. Whereof the main fruit has been that whenever the word "humanity" sounds in our ears, straightway and as if by magic the walls of our little life vanish away, we are swept out beyond parochial boundaries, and the mind begins to voyage on vast and troubled seas of thought. Visions and experiences crowd upon the mental eye so thickly, that not even the intelligence, much less the tongue, can make them articulate. "Humanity;" we have hardly written the word before three hundred million Chinamen are marching across the field of vision. "Humanity"—and lo! we are doing a day's work in a coal mine or by the dock side; we are completing our fifteenth hour in a signal-box, or our twelfth in the fœtid atmosphere of an underground station. "Humanity"—and immediately we are gifted with a hundred pair of eyes, whereof some will pierce through the smoke canopy of Sheffield or Wolverhampton, and take imperishable photographs of the act and attitude of every living body in suburbs or in street, while others will roam over all Empires, British or Foreign, and behold each secret thing that is done in Aden, Port Said, or Singapore; in Cape Town, Buenos Ayres or in Yucatan. "Humanity"—and as it were we are multiplied into ten thousand personalities. We work our passage in the stoke-hole of a steamer, hire ourselves under Polynesian palms, whet the slaughter knife on the cattle stages of New York, plough virgin soil, grow cotton and ranch, keep a saloon at 'Frisco, a shop in Whitechapel, a gambling hell at Monte Carlo; we join the coolie gang on the desert railway, fight with Tommy Atkins at Abu Klea, or assist Mr. Rhodes in the practical extension of the Empire; we patrol the slum with Constable X, we clear away our own refuse, kill and cook our own dinner, and cut a sewer before our own front door. Hence it comes to pass that in all this wide world there is no dirty job but we have done it; there is no mean employment in which we have not earned our living, no chastisement of others' peace under which our backs have not smarted, no species of drudgery however monotonous, nor of fatigue however exhausting, nor of humiliation however deep, which we have not known in all its sorrow and tasted in all its bitterness. Nor while we thus laboured and sorrowed has the mind been inactive; nay not even in those rarer moments when we too became "embodied dreams," when we lunched with His Royal Highness after the shooting, or paid for our billiard room with a cheque of five figures, not even then has the divine faculty of thought been entirely suspended. Swinging the scythe with leather-bellied harvestmen, spreading manure before the light had broken on the furrows of a sodden field in February, looking back on the record of a life spent in the nursery of others' babies or the washing of linen, making shirts at ninepence per dozen and with no other prospect either in life or beyond it, drunk times without number and intending to be drunk as many times more, loafing, gambling and fighting, striking, tramping, starving, sleeping in casual wards, till the clothes, oft mended by the wayside, have rotted off our backs—in all these varied stations and employments one thought has hovered dimly in the brain, that when the whips of fate should allow a little leisure, we

would seek out the Head Registry Office of the Universe, and, assuming each of the aforementioned disguises, humbly crave recognition as belonging to Humanity.

Alas! we have been driven to the conclusion that human life as it is consists of nothing so much as of hard or even dirty work. We are not Pessimists and would fain see a "Society" founded for their conversion; but its operations should rest upon a plain acknowledgment of the fact aforesaid. "On nothing so much as of hard or even dirty work"—with this view of life before us we have sought to give the order of Gentlemen its proper place in the scheme of things. We find it to be the outcome of the eternal effort of man to be what he is not. In establishing it Society has but yielded to the universal tendency of man to protest against himself, or as Hegel would put it, to set up an antinomy within the bounds of his own nature The inevitable consequence of these conditions upon the Gentleman's attitude of mind is a certain blindness to the truth of things. Well were it if his religion, that greatest of all forces, should be so wedded to reality and so charged with the spirit of fact, that it might play the part of a corrective in the general distortion of his mind. But, "like to like" is the rule of the world. The Gentleman being himself a contradiction his religion is apt to become a contradiction also. It, too, is an Established Institution like himself; in doctrines antithetic to the Realities of the Universe; abounding in precepts which all the world neglects; treating Matter as Form and Form as Matter; its living Head the contrast to its dead Founder, and its present ministers to its first apostles; its practice a foil to its theory; glorifying poverty and yet not loath to be rich; worshipping a cross while kneeling on a cushion; commending piety but skilled in policy; determined to be greatest but urging others to make themselves least; inflamed with the spirit of the sword while chanting devotions to the Prince of Peace.*

The most disastrous freak of Evolution was perpetrated in that fatal hour when the Religion of Gentlemen became separated from the Religion of Men. None of the existing churches or sects can claim the former as exclusively its own: the baneful thing exists in them all, though with varying degrees of intensity and obtrusiveness. As the Gentleman himself is but a forced antithesis to the Man, so his religion is apt to be a worship of phantoms and a teaching of falsehoods. It calls itself Christian; but the principle of *lucus a non lucendo* alone can justify the appellation. Put "not" into the positive precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and withdraw it from the prohibitions, and you have a measure of the amount of Christianity contained in this creed. Its relation to the facts of life is one of thorough-going repulsion; affinity with the teachings of Christ it has none. All who worship its idols grow constitutionally blind to the simple truth that behind the mechanism of every human figure, however marred and out of joint, there lives a human soul. Hence it comes to pass that wrongs are perpetuated and iniquities ignored; that the Church and the World part company, and Religion falls out of touch with Life. But the Religion of Men has other qualities. It is a tower built on the rock of naked truth, standing four-square to the storms of fact which blow upon it from all quarters of the sky. Above it floats a flag of defiance whereon the highest truths are written, and from it there has gone forth a promise into all lands that the world shall have no peace until the Spirit of the Best has subdued the Spirit of the Worst. As from some high post of observation, its defenders survey the whole field of human life, where the saddest sights, as well as the loveliest, lie plain in view. Nothing is overlooked, forgotten, or extenuated, and never is the spirit of that Religion more exultant than when challenged to hold its own against the grim confederation of the world's sorrow and sin. Some of it there was in the old time, when our Calvinist forefathers rejoiced in the prospect of being damned for the glory of God. They who see behind words to their inner meaning will be conscious that the faith of these latter days sadly needs a breath of that self-same spirit. Wherefore let "*Veni Creator Spiritus*" be the prayer of all souls.

* *E.G.*—In the monthly chanting of Psalm cx., as it occurs in the regular Order of the Church Psalter.

Friendship between man and dog is lasting because the latter cannot speak his mind.

Sudermann's "Johannes."

To write a stage-play dealing with what the world has agreed to regard as sacred subjects, is to embark upon a very bold enterprise, requiring for its justification qualities in the author far in excess of mere technical and literary skill. Unless he is, in addition to this, possessed of real and reverent sympathy with his theme, more than ordinary insight, and very considerable tact, he will, as likely as not, with the best of intentions, be simply committing an outrage upon art and religion alike, and be speedily convicted of his mistake by the antagonism his play will arouse.

To say, therefore, that Sudermann, the German dramatist, in his tragedy of S. John the Baptist, has escaped the danger of offending religious susceptibilities by his presentment of Biblical characters, is in itself no mean praise; and perhaps those who were best acquainted with the gifted playwright's previous successes in the field of modern realistic drama, have reason to be most pleasantly surprised by the result which he has achieved in an altogether novel and difficult domain.

Not that *Johannes* is a perfect play by any means; from the point of view of theatrical production it suffers from occasional diffuseness, from too much that is episodic, from being overcrowded with detail, from the multitude of characters—thirty-nine in all—that are brought upon the boards; in a word, for acting purposes it would gain by the excision of several scenes, and by greater "closeness" of the whole dramatic structure. At the same time, speaking from the standpoint of the reader merely, we should be sorry to see any part of the play disappear, for every touch is deliberately introduced, with the intention of heightening the local colour or deepening the effect that is aimed at; even the conversation between the pious, law-ridden merchants, Eliakim and Pasur, even the contemptuous "No!" with which the serving-maids of Herod's palace decline the proffered blessing of the priests, contribute their item to the general picture of "life in Palestine when Jesus lived."

The story, as told by Sudermann, is, with very few deviations, that which we read in the Gospels, viz., John's preaching in the wilderness of baptism and the coming Messiah, his conflict with Herod, his imprisonment and death through the vengeful machinations of Herodias, who employs her daughter Salome as her instrument. In keeping so closely to the facts narrated in the New Testament, and manipulating them so as to bring out their full dramatic possibilities, the author has shown a good deal of constructive power as well as wisdom, for few things would have irritated the reader or spectator so much as palpable liberties taken with the familiar original. The supplementary incidents and motives which he adds to the plot—such as Herod's satiety of Herodias and doubly-shameful passion for Salome, and Salome's hatred of the Baptist who has spurned her advances—are all dramatically valuable and justifiable; above all, John's gradual conversion to the gospel of love through the influence of Jesus and through personal experience is, if not historical, superbly imagined and carried through.

But it will be better to give a brief account of this very remarkable play, which initiates a new phase in the development of its brilliant writer, and has, both on the stage and in its published form, met with extraordinary interest in Germany. The prelude shows us the Baptist and his adherents in the Judæan desert on the eve of the Passover, and we are at once given to understand the powerful influence which this man exercises over those who approach him. The secret of that influence resides in his absolute belief in his own message, his certainty that Israel's misery is approaching its end, and that the final era of triumph and glory will presently be opened by "him who cometh." The people hear and are deeply impressed; yet one or two question, who is "he that cometh?" John cannot tell his name, but he has seen him—once; and he relates to his hearers in the very words of the Gospel the story of how one came down to Jordan to receive his baptism, how he was scarce persuaded to administer the rite, how the heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended, and a voice spake "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And John knew that it was he, the deliverer of his nation, and though he has not seen him since, his soul has felt no more fear or doubt from that day onward.

Suddenly this scene is interrupted by messengers bringing news almost incredible. Herod, with his brother's runaway wife and daughter,

has arrived in Jerusalem, and after the unlawful wedding Herodias proposes to add fresh insult to God by entering the temple in state, received by the high priest. John is stirred to his depths by these tidings; such an abomination must not be, and he recognises his mission—to place himself at the head of the people, stand in the way of the guilty couple, and prevent so unspeakable a crime. With the stern announcement of this purpose the prelude ends, the key-note has been struck, and we are prepared for the events of the play itself.

The first act does not apparently advance us very materially, though it draws for us a series of vivid pictures of the state of things in Jerusalem itself. We see the brutality of the Roman soldiery, the wretched thraldom and casuistry of Scribes and Pharisees, the people's detestation of the foreign rule, and longing for a war-like Messiah. The chief incident of this act is the crafty interrogation of John—who has been preaching against Herod—by two Pharisees, as to his opinions concerning the law, and the startling exclamation of one Simeon, a Galilean, when John himself keeps a confused silence: "Higher than law and sacrifice is love." Simeon speedily falls a victim to the fury of the zealots, but the effect of his remark upon John himself cannot be measured. John until now has preached anger, judgment, and retribution; but of *love* as a factor in the redemption of the world he has never heard. "Was it not love the Galilean said?" he anxiously repeats, as he and his disciples remain alone on the scene of the tumult.

We are next taken to Herod's palace, where we have an opportunity of judging of the early depravity of Salome, of her mother's ill-concealed jealousy, of the weakness of the dissolute Herod who already plans how he may get rid of the violent, headstrong Herodias, before whose outbursts of rage he is powerless. Herodias has sent for John in order to bribe or otherwise persuade him to desist from stirring up the people against her. Salome has contrived to see him alone, and, strangely fascinated and awed at the same time by his terrible earnestness, has tried her arts of seduction upon him—all in vain; her mother, with her offers of worldly power and splendour, fares no better; for John denounces her to her face with a directness which rouses her to bitterest resentment. Disregarding her threats, he calmly passes out of the palace, not without, however, having awakened by his contempt of death the passionate admiration of Salome, who has been a witness of the interview.

The following act, which culminates in the central crisis of the play, is mainly devoted to showing how John's self-distrust and distrust of his own harsh doctrine grow stronger and stronger. We saw the initial change wrought in him by Simeon's mention of love as the highest power; now Jael, the wife of one of John's most trusted disciples, complains to him bitterly that he has robbed her and her children of a husband's and father's love—a reproach which at first he hardly understands. Meshullemeth the beggar woman who awaits the coming of the Messiah, rejects his message of a conquering, royal saviour, wielding a flaming sword, and calls him a false prophet; and at length some Galilean pilgrims complete his mental disarray and perplexity by telling him of one Jesus of Nazareth, who calls himself the Son of God, and who goes about teaching men strange doctrines, to love their enemies, to bless those who curse them, and pray for those who persecute them. John is completely bewildered; can it be that this is "he who cometh," and that these are his commands? But the hour demands action: it is getting daylight, the procession of Herod and Herodias to the temple, attended by a Roman guard of honour, is approaching; the wrathful populace gathers at the portals, ready to execrate, to stone the offenders—if John will lead them. But will he? His friends notice that he stands as one whose spirit is elsewhere. They exhort him to firmness; one of them presses a stone into his hand. Now the *cortège* arrives; John, with visible effort, exclaims:—"In the name of him who . . . commands me to . . . love thee . . ." —the stone rolls from his impotent grasp, the procession passes on, contemptuous, unhindered, and while the people moan a long-drawn "Woe!" the curtain descends.

When it rises again, we find ourselves in Galilee, in John's prison. After his ineffectual protest he has been arrested, forsaken by the majority of his disappointed disciples, and transported to one of the tetrach's strongholds. It is here that Herod, who is not without a glimmer-

ing of, or devoid of sympathy with, the Baptist's nobility of character, visits him, and seeks to make his peace with him, without, however, bending his spirit; here, also, Salome, who has gained access by a ruse, makes a last and desperate attempt to subdue John by her allurements, but is repelled by him with such withering scorn and insult that her passion is turned to devouring hatred. John feels that his end is nigh; there is only one hope he cherishes, one question he desires to have answered, and whose nature may be easily guessed: Was his faith in the Messiah a delusion, or is it on the eve of fulfilment? To Jesus, in whose country he now is, he despatches two of his faithful friends in failure and misery, with the question—"Art thou he that cometh, or wait we for another?" These two, Amariah and Manasseh, had been among the least of his disciples; yet, as he dismisses them, he clasps their hands for a moment, and the strong, self-contained man breaks out into the unexpected confession—"Methinks, my friends, I love you."

We are approaching the final scene. Herod, to please Vitellius, the Roman legate, and to gratify his own desire, has asked Salome to dance at a feast he is giving; and Herodias, whose anger against the Baptist is still unquenched, has suggested to Salome that for her reward she should ask for the head of John—a suggestion with which her daughter readily complies, maddened as she is by John's rejection of her. The dance is finished, Herod is regretfully bound by his promise, and John is brought in to make sport for the Romans, and to ask for his life if he so chooses. He asks not for mercy, but for an hour's respite, urging that he awaits some messenger; while he yet speaks, the gaoler enters, craving Herod's pardon for introducing two men, who protest that they must see John at all costs; it is the faithful Amariah and Manasseh, and this their message from Jesus: "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me." This is the news that John has longed for; he is ready to die, and with jubilant prediction on his lips, disdaining to crave for release, he is led off to instant execution.

But all is not over; a few moments later, while Salome in a fury of exultant revenge re-enters dancing and bearing the Baptist's head, a mighty cry from a thousand throats is heard under Herod's windows: "Hosanna, hail to thee, King of the Jews!" "Who, then, is *he*?" Herod cries; "I *will* see him!" And jumping up from his banquet, he hastens to the window, goblet in hand, about to exclaim in mockery, "Hail! King of the Jews!" when his tongue stops in the middle of the sentence, the drinking vessel glides from his hand, and he turns away, hiding his face in his cloak. He has seen "him who is to come," and the vision has been too much for him.

Such is Sudermann's "Johannes," so far as a bald outline like this can give an idea of the work; our sole excuse for attempting what could only be so inadequately done, is that the play cannot be produced in England, and has not yet been translated, so that this is the only way in which a drama, significant and admirable in many respects, could be introduced to the reader's notice.

J. WARSCHAUER.

In Cowslip Time.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PLANT-LIFE."

A short light shower of soft warm rain has fallen, and all the air is full of the fine aroma of bursting buds and unrolling ferns. It is spring; prison doors are opened to them that were bound; our minds and bodies catching the inspiration of the leaves, blithely too go forth into the air and light, to pace the winding road that traverses the gorge between two tree-clad hills. A little while and we have reached the highest point, from which we look down upon the sleepy hamlet whose red-tiled cottages lie scattered among masses of fresh greenery. Ten paces farther and a mossy wicket admits us to a lonely hillside wood, overlooking a vast extent of country six hundred feet below. Upon the sloping banks on either side are multitudes of "nodding violets," and the chaffy crowns and snowy blossoms of the wild strawberry. That

mass of exquisite azure before us denotes the fugacious four petalled blooms of speedwell. We leave the beaten track and wander carelessly among the denser portion of the wood. The dead leaves of the old year lie thick and soft beneath our feet, all the crispness and the rustle taken out of them by the frost and rain. One of their many purposes is served. They have formed a winter covering to shield from frost the tender seeds and plants, and now are becoming covered in their turn by plants that push above them.

Down in the wooded hollow far ahead a sheet of gold is gleaming in the sun beneath the tremulous aspens—

"Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty."

Thousands of them jostle each other and nod familiarly to the greenish hoods and spotted leaves of "lords-and-ladies" close at hand. Hard-by groups of adder's-tongues are sending up their spear-shaped fronds and ruddy spikes of spores, by country children known as "red-hot pokers."

We take a turn beneath a fine old ash, its leafless branches beautiful with clusters of purple blooms, and reach the upper path that winds across the wood. Its banks are beautiful with yellow bedstraw and silvery stellate flowers of lesser stitchwort, that rise above the purple labiate flowers of the ground ivy. Above us the sloping hillside is covered with a wood of straight tall pines, beneath which a carpet of the deepest blue betrays the all-but-bursting buds of

"Sheets of hyacinth
That seem the heavens upbreaking through the earth."

The wind makes pleasant melody among the trees, and now another note is added—a silvery note that tells of rippling streams. A bend in our path discovers the instrument whereon that note is played. From the rugged escarpment of the rocky hill, far above, a streak of liquid silver drops and sparkles in the vernal sunbeams. From point to point it falls, and as it strikes upon the jutting rocks the silver is broken up into myriads of tiny many-hued gems that scatter far and wide amongst the humble vegetation of the rocks. We follow this hillside burn and note the many plants it nurtures.

Here in the hollow where it overflows and widely spreads among the sphagnum and rushes, is a sight worth seeing. For here prosperous colonies of marsh marigolds, or

"Winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes."

We tread lightly now from clump to clump of sedge and cotton-grass, for sphagnum-moss is bibulous as sponge, and too much trust in the firmness of the ground may send you home with feet all wet and cold. Long-stalked spearwort mimics in a smaller way the golden cups of marigold. Here is another of Shakespeare's flowers, for the bitter-cress, or

"Lady-smocks all silver white,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

Only in this case we should read copse for meadows, and then the rhythm is gone. But never mind, we have rhythm enough in the splashing and purling of our mimic waterfall. And here we are where its waters are frothing and foaming among the masses of fallen rock. What though there is not force enough to turn a mill, it yet has a grandeur all its own, if we but view it in the proper light. Here is a pocket lens. We carefully focus it, and examine the surfaces of stones around us, to find each covered with beautiful growths of delicate moss and seedling fern that form beneath our glass a fairy forest, swarming with animal life of an alarming character. Size is but a relative quality, and to the insects that people the moss-growth, its slender stems are as grand and majestic as the firwood is to us. The highest mountain is but a slight irregularity on the surface as compared with the entire extent of the earth, and, inversely, this little rill that trickles down the face of the rugged hill has, when compared with the forest of moss, a grandeur unequalled by Niagara itself.

But let us mount to the hill-top and see what is to be seen there. Here is a path through the gorge which offers an easy ascent. Along its flanks crowds of woolly-leaved foxgloves are getting ready for their grand display of purple spikes. That colony of pigmy plants with scanty leaves and tiny flowers that cap the dry bank on the left, consists of the whitlow-grass, one of the smallest and earliest of our flowering plants. Not far removed, in the same

position, is the early field scorpion-grass, the smallest of our forget-me-nots. And now we reach the top, which is covered with bright green heather and cross-leaved heath, and the twisted, jointed stems of whortleberry, with its bursting leaf-buds and crimson bell-shaped flowers. The golden furze is all aglow again, and "daisies pied" illume the short-cropped grass. Beneath the heather all the ground is grey with reindeer-moss, cup-moss, and other kinds of lichens, and here and there are patches of the moonwort fern, which old Culpepper says will open locks and bolts.

We look at that fir-wood creeping up the hillside. What an exquisite green mist seems floating over the gaunt stems and blackened masts. We note, too, that huge old beech below us, where the thrush pipes out his joyous song. Its bursting buds give it a purple hue which soon shall be replaced by the fresh green of its crisp and crumpled leaves. All around us the crosier-like fronds of bracken-fern are rapidly unrolling, hiding the undergrowth of diminutive plants that cling closely to the earth. Here is the bright little strawberry-leaved cinquefoil, and the unpleasantly-named lousewort with erect striking pink flowers. As we wade knee-deep through the heather and watch the merry squirrels on the branches above us, we are startled by the black-grouse rising from our feet, which have probably been in dangerous proximity to her eggs. Among the heather the pale golden-green fronds of the mountain fern show brightly. On the low branches of the oak the ring-dove sits upon her nest—a mere platform of twigs—and flies at our approach, uttering her melancholy note. In the high branches of the elm and chestnut whole colonies of rooks are chattering and robbing each other of building materials.

We reach again the lower lands and wander through the meadows where yellow is the favoured hue. Rich cowslips are abundant. So are the cheerful humble-bees that pry into the innermost recesses of the flower in quest of honey, just as they did when Shakespeare wrote—

> "Where the bee sucks, there lurk I,
> In a cowslip's-bell I lie."

But not alone to these is the meadow indebted for its golden colour. Shining buttercups seem more abundant than the blades of green, and look! each golden cup contains a beautiful living gem: a beetle—on whose hard upper wings have mingled all the bow's bright tints to give a glorious effect of colour that is really dazzling in the sun's rays.

What is its name? Ah, now you puzzle me, for English name it has none that I know of, but beetle-hunters who visit this sloping mead call it by the unpretending name of *Cryptocephalus hypocharidis!* Here are thousands of them, and we have but to lightly sweep our butterfly-net over the yellow flowers to get a handful of them in a few moments. But stay, our butterfly-net is needed for its rightful purpose, for here come two specimens of the earliest butterfly of spring—the brimstone, with its pale primrose-tinted wings, each with its central orange spot. No! we have missed them both. Well, never mind, they are the first we have seen this season; they will be common enough a little later. And now look at that interesting group of long-tailed tits that dart about among the branches of the willow. Under and over the branches they go, standing upright, then swinging upside down, their long tails sticking straight out and their tiny beaks ever pecking at some invisible prey.

Before us lies the old grey lichened stile, on either hand of which the stony hedge is bright with last year's polypody fronds, still fresh and green. Over the stile we leap, and soon are pacing the sandy lane beneath the branching arms of trees that form the squirrels' playground. Another mile and we have reached the spot from whence we started, by another route. So ends our vernal ramble, but in our vasculum are spoils will serve us on a winter's day to call to mind a pleasant jaunt

> "In cowslip time when hedges sprout."

The dull and unattractive man must not be despised. He is simply raw material, so much soul stuff, not yet worked up, and you can no more tell what he will become than you could tell what picture would appear at last on the canvas from examining Turner's colour box. Out of that unpromising face, that sleeping intellect, that crust of surliness, the divine artist is going to fashion a thing of immortal beauty.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Cuckoo.

The Cuckoo is so remarkable a bird that to do justice to its habits would require a whole volume, and we shall be able to consider here only one phase of its life.

Most of us know that the female cuckoo makes no nest of its own, but deposits its egg in the nest of some other bird, leaving to the latter the task of hatching the eggs and bringing up the young.

The proverbial present of a "white elephant" finds a parallel in bird life in this unwelcome and disastrous gift of the cuckoo's egg, for the bird whose nest is so "honoured" never deserts the strange charge thus unceremoniously thrust upon it; but seems to regard feeding the young cuckoo to be a sacred duty, while it sees its own young nestling ejected and perish apparently without the slightest concern. Almost any nest will do for the cuckoo to appropriate as a hatching place for its offspring; and fly catchers, warblers, and finches are alike put under contribution to provide a house for the little stranger, although the nests of those birds living upon insects are usually selected.

The eggs of the cuckoo are noticeably small for the size of the bird, and it is a remarkable fact, that in whatever nest they are deposited, they are invariably almost an exact copy in colour, size, and shape of the egg of the foster-parent.

I watched last year the development of a cuckoo's egg laid in a robin's nest, and while both the young cuckoo and the young robins were still blind and unfledged the robins were thrown out of the nest one by one till the young usurper was in sole possession.

The labour undergone by the old robins in supplying the wide throat of their voracious guest was something incredible.

In a very short time too, he became bigger than both his foster parents put together, and then it was quite distressing to note their unrewarded toil as they waited upon him like slaves.

It is very strange that the foster-parents should ever mistake the young cuckoo for their own offspring, for, irrespective of size, the plumage is so different; and there is yet another reason why one would think they must know the two apart, the cuckoo, as he grows older, beginning to resemble the hawk, of which all birds are known to feel the greatest terror.

That the small birds themselves do not at all covet the distinction of having a cuckoo's egg laid in their nests, is evidenced by the fact that in the early spring numbers of them banded together for protection may often be seen driving the cuckoo away, and endeavouring thus to prevent her thrusting her unwelcome gifts upon them.

The cuckoo comes to England in early spring, and is found all over Europe and in Northern Asia in the mild weather. It winters in Africa, India, and Australia, and its curious mocking note sounds strangely familiar to English ears when heard in these distant lands.

The Camel's Dinner Party.

Have you heard the tale related
Of that party celebrated,
Which a camel gave last Autumn
By the waters of the Nile?
She'd invited guests in plenty
(I've been told they numbered twenty)
And included an old Ostrich,
And an ancient Crocodile.

Now an Ostrich's digestion
Is a very open question;
While a Crocodile has really
A most healthy appetite;
And the fact these two were present
Made the party most unpleasant,
As I think you'll clearly follow,
When you've heard the case aright.

For when all the cake and mustard,
All the potted-beef and custard
Had been devoured, the Ostrich
Ate the Camel's brush and comb;
And the Crocodile beside her
Didn't even frown or chide her,
While the Camel murmured faintly,
"Please to make yourselves at home."

"Them's my sentiments, precisely,
Thanks! we're getting on quite nicely,"
Said the Crocodile politely,
As he ate a guest or two,
Just a monkey and his mother,
And the Camel's only brother,
Which had he but reflected,
Was a thoughtless thing to do.

Then the Ostrich cried "Best Wishes,"
As he gobbled up the dishes,
And the table-cloth and teaspoons,
And the mugs each guest had brought.
While the Crocodile so hearty,
Just to finish up the party,
Ate the Ostrich with the others
As a happy afterthought.

"Sir!" cried Mrs. Camel, mildly,
Though her heart was beating wildly,
"I hope and trust sincerely,
You have had all you desired."
But the Crocodile felt seedy,
(Serve him right for being greedy)
And he gave a little wriggle,
And a giggle, and expired.